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# 10 die in Lagos road accident, others wounded

March 3, 2012 by Comfort Oseghale and Ademola Olonilua



About 10 people died on Friday at the Otedola Estate on the Lagos/Ibadan Expressway when five vehicles, including a trailer, ran into some oil pipes, which were lying carelessly on the road.

The oil pipelines, which were four in number, fell off another trailer on Thursday night at about 9 pm. The trailer was moving on the outbound Lagos lane towards Ogun State.

An eyewitness said, “These pipes you see on the road fell off a trailer yesterday (Thursday) night. I think the cord used to bind the pipelines came undone as the trailer sped past, but the driver was well aware when the oil pipes started dropping off.

“Those of us who witnessed the incident thought the driver would stop immediately he noticed this, but he didn’t. He simply continued on his way. We also noticed that some policemen came around and tried to remove the pipes from the road.

“The police at first tried to push the pipes off the road, but they couldn’t because of the weight. I later learned that they radioed for assistance: that a crane was needed but no help came. That was how the pipes remained on the expressway till Friday morning when some vehicles crashed into it.”

*SATURDAY PUNCH* learnt that the trailer, with registration number XZ 437 MUS (Lagos), was the first vehicle to run into the oil pipes at about 6 am on Friday. Another eyewitness said, “There were two vehicles that were involved in a racing competition with the trailer shortly before the accident: a commercial 18-seater bus and a Mazda car.

“Since it was dark and visibility was poor, the trailer was the first vehicle that ran into the pipes, causing it to fall on its left side. As the trailer fell, the Mazda and commercial bus were on that same side at the time, trying to overtake it. Unfortunately for the occupants of both cars, the trailer fell on them, killing all the occupants.

“Another Honda car was coming behind unaware of what was going on in front until it was quite close. In a bid to avoid the spot, the driver swerved to the right side of the trailer and crashed into the gutter at the side of the road.”

A bus conductor told *SATURDAY PUNCH* that 14 people died in the accident. The Chief Executive Officer of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Oluwafemi Oke-Osanyintolu, confirmed the crash. He said two people died, and at least nine injured. He said the accident occurred because some pipelines used to transport petroleum products fell off a trailer.

“A long vehicle was carrying pipes used to transport petroleum products. Somehow, these pipes fell off the truck and the driver ran away,” Oke-Osanyintolu said. “A trailer was coming with full speed and he rammed into the pipes. A commercial bus and a private car were also involved in the accident.”

Oke-Osanyintolu said that the nine injured victims were

rushed to the hospital. He stated that while some were taken to an emergency clinic situated along the expressway, the others were taken to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja.

*SATURDAY PUNCH* learnt that the initial accident that occurred on Thursday claimed the life of an unidentified couple.

A resident of Otedola Estate stated that when the big pipes fell off the trailer, the driver immediately fled.

He said, “When the pipes fell off the truck, the driver did not wait, he just sped off. Some people tried to get them off the road, but because of the weight of the pipes, they couldn’t.

“It seemed an impossible task because there was no light, the streetlight there was not working. They tried to call a towing vehicle or crane, but there was no luck so they gave up trying.”

A commercial motorcyclist who identified himself as Jerry said, “When I was coming from Ikorodu around 6 am, I saw this accident. At that time, there were two Lagos State Traffic Management Authority officials on the ground.”

*SATURDAY PUNCH* reporters saw all the vehicles involved in the accident at 8.30 am on Friday. They also saw a large towing truck parked at a corner, waiting to remove the vehicles.

The removal process lasted more than five hours, by which time the traffic situation on that section of the expressway had become chaotic. The traffic snarl spread to Marwa Gardens and Ikorodu Road, making commercial transporters

to cash in on the situation by doubling their fares as commuters became stranded.

The traffic situation on the expressway remained chaotic till late Friday night.

The police, LASEMA, LASTMA and Civil Defence Corps personnel were controlling the heavy traffic caused by the accident. The personnel of the fire service got to the scene at 9 am. They went to work immediately.

About 30 minutes later, they carried away a vehicle with registration number XN 547 LSR. Eventually, at about 11.30 am, the Mazda and the 18-seater bus were removed from the scene.

One of the survivors, Pastor Yomi Adesanya, who drove an Opel car, gave a slightly different version of events. He said, "I had just finished buying fuel and was proceeding on my journey to Ijebu-Ode when I ran into the pipes on the road. This was about 6 am. There were three persons in my car, including myself, and none of us died. We only sustained minor injuries.

"A Lagos State Traffic Management Authority official that came to the scene told me that they had been battling for hours to get the pipes off the road since yester night. Unfortunately, there was no indication, nothing on the road to alert road users that there were huge pipes lying across the road. And this is an expressway.

"I also learnt some policemen were here yesterday night and they couldn't remove them. Several vehicles had already run into the pipes before I got there; my car was the last. It was just as the Lagos State Ambulance Service bus was driving

us away to the hospital that we saw the 18-seater bus with the trailer approaching.

“It seemed the driver wasn’t even looking at where he was going and by the time he saw pipes and tried to swerve, it was too late. The trailer driver hit my own car which had already crashed into the pipes. Fortunately, we were not in it.

“I can’t really say how many people died because all the occupants of the bus were trapped under the trailer. I know some of us were taken to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, while others were taken to the LASAMB clinic at the old toll gate.”

Some eyewitnesses however put the death toll at 16.

Adesanya’s nephew, Tobi, 18, whose right arm was wrapped in bandage, said he couldn’t really recall what happened as he was in a state of shock. He said, “Everything happened so fast. I can’t say what caused the accident. I was at the back seat of my uncle’s car.”

Meanwhile, a few metres away, a trailer with registration number XM 263 AGL parked on the bridge. There were several huge pipes which were bound with cords on the deserted trailer. Some eyewitnesses claimed the driver of the trailer had hours earlier been stopped and arrested that same Friday morning by the police in an attempt to track down his colleague, who had done nothing to retrieve his pipes when they fell on Thursday night. The trailers were said to have taken off from the Apapa Ports.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Joseph Jaiyeoba, said two persons died and seven were injured.

The Public Relations of the NSCDC Mr. Sunday Eromosele, added, “Eyewitnesses told officials of NSCDC when they arrived on the scene that the total number of vehicles involved in the accident were 10, including the trailer. However, NSCDC officials met five vehicles at the scene, including the trailer. A total of nine persons were injured, while two persons were confirmed dead.”

The wife of the Ogun State Governor, Mrs. Ibikunle Amosun, expressed shock when she got to scene. Mrs. Amosun, who was travelling along the expressway, arrived there some minutes after it occurred.

In an emotion-laden voice, Mrs. Amosun said, “I’m shocked at the fatality of this accident. This is unfortunate. As a mother, I feel highly concerned. I’ve got in touch with the emergency response team to quickly come to the rescue of the people at the scene.”

A fatal accident caused by a trailer belonging to a popular cement manufacturing company had claimed 40 lives in front of Otedola Estate – near the spot of Friday’s incident – on Aug 15, 2010. The case is still undergoing an inquest.

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